



Republic of Malawi

STATEMENT ON PEACE AND SECURITY

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR BINGU WA MUTHARIKA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

AND

CHAIRMAN OF THE AFRICAN UNION

AT

THE AFRICA - FRANCE SUMMIT

NICE, FRANCE

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- **Excellency Nicholas Sarkozy, President of the Republic of France;**
- **Excellencies Heads of State and Government from Africa;**
- **Excellency, Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations;**
- **Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Jean Ping;**
- **Honourable Ministers;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I am happy to be here to address this Africa-France Summit. On behalf of the African Union, and indeed my own behalf, I express my utmost gratitude to our host, President Nicolas Sarkozy and the government and the people of France, for the warm welcome to me, and for the hospitality we have received since our arrival in this beautiful city of Nice.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

I will start my remarks by reminding Your Excellences that when the African Union assembled in Tripoli, Libya, we declared the Year 2010, as the year of Peace and Security in Africa, and we made the following commitment. I quote: “.....We are determined to deal once and for all with the scourge of conflicts and violence on our continent, acknowledging our shortcomings and errors, committing our resources and our best people, and missing no opportunity to

push forward the agenda of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction. We, as leaders, simply cannot bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans.”

This is our guiding principle. The agenda of peace and security is central for us in Africa and for the world at large. Since the independence of many African countries in the 1960s, our continent has experienced conflicts, civil strifes, wars and general political unrest which have adversely affected Africa’s ability to sustain development, peace and stability.

Peace and security are prerequisites for development of the world as a global village. The challenges confronting Africa in the areas of peace and security vary in kind and magnitude and are complex but I will now highlight a few of them.

The basic factors leading to civil wars and political conflicts in Africa are many but for purposes of our discussion, I will highlight a few.

The first one is the lack of an agreed formula for power sharing. This transcends, economic, political, social and even religious power. The critics say that those in power do not want to share such power with others. On the other hand, power-hungry opposition leaders frustrate every aspect of government policy in order to discredit those in power.

The second factor is the absence of mechanisms for smooth transfer of power from one ruling elite to another, following general elections. This problem is sometimes aggravated by attempts by the leadership to change national constitutions to enable them to continue to stay in power indefinitely. This raises protestations even within the ruling parties because the issue of succession becomes blurred.

The third factor is the unconstitutional changes of government often using factions of the military to support an individual usurping powers of an incumbent President. This causes unrest and disturbs the smooth functioning of democratic governance.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

As a result of some of these factors, we have had political conflicts in Sudan, Niger, Madagascar, Chad, Somalia and the Comoros, to name but a few. The conflicts pose a big challenge for the continent and indeed for our European partners such as France in terms of what assistance can effectively be rendered to the conflict-torn countries.

Africa's determination to democratize is also attested to by the adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which, *inter alia*, recognizes the importance of holding democratic elections, in conflict prevention, management and resolution. We have witnessed successful conduct of elections in Mauritania, Ghana, Togo, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, Mauritius and just last month, in The Sudan. The EU as well as some European governments played their commendable roles in ensuring free, fair and credible outcomes of the electoral processes.

At the continental level, we are doing all we can to address and arrest these unfortunate developments at all levels. As Chairperson of the AU, I personally have scheduled visits to some troubled spots, not very long from now, in order to urge the brothers and sisters in these countries, to give peace a chance. We are prepared to change our

ways of addressing strifes and conflicts by among others addressing the root causes of such situations.

Excellencies

The African Union has made conflict prevention, management and resolution the core of our mission. The AU is building institutions for peace and security which are imperatives if the continent is to develop in all areas of human endeavour. The ratification of the protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council and its coming into force in December 2003, introduced new institutions and decision-making processes into Africa's peace and security architecture.

I am also glad to report that the pillars of the new architecture are the Peace and Security Council itself, the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force and the Peace Fund. The Panel of the Wise has assisted the PSC and Commission in highlighting the importance of dealing with election related conflicts and addressing issues of impunity. The new approach should seek to effectively use of the Panel of the Wise in conflict prevention efforts.

The Continental Early Warning System, on the other hand, provides information and a data base, to help the Peace and Security Council anticipate and prevent conflicts. Yet another institution created to support the Peace and Security Council is the African Standby Force, ready for rapid deployment.

We believe with support of countries such as France and other cooperating partners, Africa will take a more inclusive and assertive approach to conflict prevention, and encourage a well stream-lined

methodology that removes conflicting interests amongst the continent and the cooperating partners.

The agenda for this meeting is therefore timely and relevant. We need to devise strong and feasible partnerships to build peace and security to deal with conflicts. In this regard, the need for the helping hands of France, Europe and other partners cannot be over emphasized. For instance, there is a very strong, practical and palpable relationship between us and the EU through and within the Framework of the Peace and Security Partnerships of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and Action Plan adopted in Lisbon in December 2008.

This has facilitated the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture through the Financing Agreement for the Africa Peace Fund to the tune of Euro 300 million for the period 2008 to 2010. Our joint effort and cooperation in the Sudan and Somalia are ample testimony of the depth of our cooperation.

It would, however, be remiss of me not to mention the AU's cooperation with the United Nations in the field of peace and security. Let me acknowledge the very successful cooperation we have had with the UN in Somalia through AMISOM and in Sudan's Darfur, through our joint peacemaking force, the UNAMID.

I am very happy that the parties to the Sudanese Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 have kept their word. Multiparty general elections were held in April this year and a new Government is now in place. I have received assurance that the Referendum will be held in 2011 as agreed. We are hoping for a new Sudan.

I seize this opportunity to recognize the sterling work of former South African President, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, the AU High Level Implementation Panel, especially with regard to the challenges associated with the preparations for the South Sudan 2011 referendum and other pertinent issues. The people of Sudan must also be congratulated for emerging from the electoral process and for having the fortitude and dignity of accepting the outcome and shunning violent conflict. I witnessed a colourful inauguration ceremony at which all Sudanese people were represented.

I thank you.